

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Montana State Office

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<http://www.mt.blm.gov/>

In Reply To:
1120 (912) P

October 2, 2003

Instruction Memorandum No. MT-2004-001

Expires: 09/30/05

To: State Management Team
From: State Director
Subject: Communications Procedures

Our organization strives to provide a well-developed and consistent message to the public. We must also deliver accurate and timely responses to requests for information. This instruction memorandum outlines communications procedures for the Montana/Dakotas BLM.

Public Outreach/Involvement: Some form of public outreach should be included in all but the most mundane of internal activities. A communications plan can help define issues or opportunities, focus our thinking, attention, and resources, and point out possible pitfalls. It also provides a logical chronology for needed actions and delegates responsibility for achieving them. Finally, it allows us to think through an issue from several points of view at an early stage. A sample plan is contained in Attachment 2. Examples are also available on the WO Public Affairs Home Page (<http://web.blm.gov/internal/wo-600/610/index.html>) under the heading *External Communications*.

Media Inquiries: Most people form their impressions of BLM through the media. We should try to be proactive with the media whenever possible and constantly strive to build and maintain positive working relationships with them. Field offices should coordinate with External Affairs (EA) before responding to statewide or Bureauwide issues.

In the rare event that an opinion-editorial or letter to the editor is considered, field offices should coordinate the proposed message with EA to ensure consistency with state and national Bureau policy, and to avoid conflict with actions taking place elsewhere in the state.

Inquiries from media outlets outside Montana must be reported to EA, who must in turn report such inquiries to the WO and notify any BLM office in the outlet's circulation area. Responses to inquiries or submissions to news media outside a field office's area of responsibility should be coordinated with the office(s) that reside within the circulation area or viewing audience of the media outlet. For releases of information common to several offices, such as recruitment for seasonal firefighters, a news release to media throughout the state referencing all offices involved can present a more coordinated message.

Interviews with reporters may include a public affairs representative or manager should the interviewee desire. A third party can protect the employee being interviewed in the event of misquotes or

misrepresentations of facts. They can also get the interview back on track if it starts going in a questionable direction with information, or supply additional information that the interviewee may not have or remember to provide. Pre-interview advice is also available from EA.

Inquiries received from the news media should be coordinated as follows:

Field offices with a full-time public affairs officer (PAO): Coordinate with the field office PAO unless the field manager directs otherwise. The PAO should coordinate the response with the appropriate managers and program leads to ensure an accurate, timely, and appropriate response.

Field offices with a collateral duty PAO: Coordinate with the collateral duty PAO or whomever the field manager designates. The coordination procedure should be designed to ensure accurate, timely, and appropriate responses.

Montana State Office and BiFO: Coordinate with the appropriate member of the EA staff.

Congressional Contacts: Field managers are encouraged to build good working relationships with Congressional staffs. This includes providing them with advance briefings on major issues. Field offices should inform EA about any contacts planned or made with the Montana or Dakotas congressional delegations about any matters beyond routine constituent inquiries. Field offices receiving written routine constituent inquiries should respond directly to the member or constituent as requested and send copies of the incoming and response to MT-912. External Affairs will coordinate responses to congressional inquiries that are addressed to the State Director after consultation with field offices or program leads. Our intent is not to control access to elected officials, but to coordinate it so that our message can be consistent and reflect a statewide or bureau-wide position. For further guidance, see IM 2001-173 dated 7/13/01 (Attachment 3).

News Releases: External Affairs should receive a copy of all field office news releases. Field offices should stay abreast of WO approval requirements. News releases issued from the State Office will be emailed to SMT members and posted at <http://www.mt.blm.gov/ea/index.html>.

News Clips: Each field office is responsible for monitoring the newspapers whose primary circulation is within their area of responsibility. Any article that pertains to BLM should be clipped and faxed to EA as soon as possible. (The State Office reviews the *Billings Gazette* and *Great Falls Tribune*.) Clips from magazines and professional journals are also welcome. External Affairs will compile the clips and distribute copies to field offices and the WO office twice a week or more. Please circulate these packages within your offices.

Monthly Public Affairs Conference Call: External Affairs conducts monthly conference calls with the field office PAOs or backups to gather and relay information to/from Washington Office Public Affairs, State Director, program leads, and other sources. Field managers should ensure that the PAO or a backup is on each call. Field managers are also welcome to participate.

Support to Divisions and Field Offices: External Affairs welcomes and encourages field office and division requests for support. They can provide advice and support via telephone or email, or can assign a public affairs specialist to a project. The EA staff can assist with special event planning and execution; writing communications plans; preparing presentations for county commission and other public meetings; facilitating media interviews; writing issue papers, brochures, articles, material for the internet, and other public information products on sensitive topics; taking photographs for use in presentations, publications and the internet home page; and doing a variety of other communications tasks. The Printing and Graphics staff can help create printed materials, graphics and power point presentations.

Weekly Secretarial Report: This report is widely read and distributed in the Director's office as well as at the Department and White House levels. It is an excellent opportunity for us to report on Montana/Dakotas

events. Field office specialists, division representatives and PAOs are responsible for submitting weekly highlights to MT-912; EA will forward the information to the Washington Office by close of business on Tuesdays. External Affairs will send weekly reminders to the field PAOs and division representatives. The latest report is available at <http://web.blm.gov/internal/wo-600/610/weekly/latest.html>.

VIP tours: External Affairs coordinates VIP tours with the appropriate field office, and will provide support and guidance as needed. Tour requests may come from Congressionals, Washington Office, etc.

Newsletters (*NoteWorthy News*; *Quarterly Steward*; *People, Land and Water*): External Affairs coordinates the production and distribution of *NoteWorthy News* (internal monthly newsletter posted on intranet) and the *Quarterly Steward* (printed quarterly for MT/DKs employees and external audiences). It also submits articles to the Washington Office for use in *People, Land and Water* (printed monthly for DOI employees). All BLM employees are invited to submit articles and should coordinate with EA or the appropriate PAO to do so. Current and back issues of the *Steward* and *NoteWorthy News* are available at <http://web.mt.blm.gov/> under the heading *Newsletters*.

Briefing Papers: Briefing papers are maintained in the national briefing paper database, which is available through Lotus Notes. A user guide which explains how to access the database is available from the WO Public Affairs website (<http://web.blm.gov/internal/wo-600/610/index.html>) under the heading Internal Communications, Briefing Papers. Every 6 months EA calls for updates, then compiles, prints and distributes a briefing book using the information that is in the database. In addition, individual briefing papers are updated as needed. The latest versions are also available at <http://www.mt.blm.gov/ea/bps/index.html>.

Annual Report: Early each calendar year, EA calls for statistics from the previous fiscal year. The most frequently requested data is compiled, printed and distributed to Congressional staffs, special interest groups, RAC members, other members of the public and BLM offices. The more detailed statistics are posted at <http://www.mt.blm.gov/ea/annrpt/index.html>.

To access the information published by EA staff, go to <http://www.mt.blm.gov/ea/eaindex.html>.

Signed by: A. Jerry Meredith, Associate State Director

Authenticated by: Ann Boucher, Editorial Assistant

2 Attachments

- 1 - Sample Public Outreach Plan (1 p)
- 2 - IM No. 2001-173, dated 7/13/01 (4 pp)

SAMPLE PUBLIC AFFAIRS/COMMUNICATIONS PLAN OUTLINE

- I. **ISSUE:** A summary of the situation, problem or opportunity. If possible, include a statement of value we can potentially gain. This can often be in the form of where we are versus where we want to be. This is best based on facts but often has to be based on our best judgment.
- IA. *BACKGROUND: (Optional) Depending on the complexity of the issue, it may be helpful to include background information. How did the issue evolve? Has something occurred that has changed the way we view this issue or made it the likely subject of controversy?*
- II. **OBJECTIVES:** If this whole plan works to perfection, what do you want the outcome to be? There can be more than one objective. Remember to think about those who could oppose your project. Be optimistic, but retain at least a semblance of realism.
- IIA. *GOALS: (Optional) If your objectives are long term or far reaching, you may want break them into smaller, more measurable goals. These can be listed under a separate heading or combined with the objectives section.*
- III. **TARGET AUDIENCES:** List the groups and individuals who will have an interest. Not only those who will be personally impacted, but also those who have an emotional, financial or professional stake. Spend some time thinking about this--connections are not always obvious. Remember, the general public is not a target audience.
- IIIA. *KEY MESSAGES: (Optional, but barely) This is often an extremely helpful step, and your key messages can normally double as a set of talking points so that everyone that may be involved in the project is speaking from the same sheet.*
- IIIB. *MATERIALS & APPROACHES: (Optional) You may want to provide a general explanation of what materials and methods will be used to reach to your different target audiences. This gives you a good opportunity to analyze the best way to communicate with each target group and avoid the "one size fits all" syndrome.*
- IV. **ACTIONS:** This is a chronological list of specific steps that will be taken. Each major action should make a specific contribution to one of the objectives and be designed to reach a specific target group. Major actions can include direct contact, supplying information materials, promotion or media, etc. Normally different actions are needed to reach different audiences. This section also includes needed administrative-type actions such as assembling a mailing list.
- V. **RESPONSIBLE PERSON:** Who is going to take each action listed? This should be a specific person, not a group or an office.
- VI. **DUE DATE:** When each action is to be completed.

Note: Don't forget an evaluation of success and failure. Make that one of your action items. An evaluation will be a great help on the next plan.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

July 13, 2001

In Reply Refer To:
1750 (620) P

EMS TRANSMISSION 07/13/2001
Instruction Memorandum No. 2001-173
Expires: 09/30/2002

To: State and Center Directors

From: Director

Subject: Congressional Relations

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide you with the following procedures designed to ensure effective processing and handling of congressional inquiries and communications. They are intended to assure that we speak with one voice on policy and legislative matters, while allowing for the necessary and invaluable communications that occur in the field between local congressional staff and BLM. The procedures address the most frequent instances in which we work with Congress. They should be shared widely with staff, especially with anyone who is likely to interact with congressional offices.

1. Providing Factual Information. The BLM routinely responds to many types of information requests from Congress. Most routine inquiries should be handled directly in the field; e.g., responses to routine requests for maps, survey notes, brochures, or requests for factual information. However, if there is a possibility the information is being requested for a future hearing or to develop legislation, WO Legislative Affairs should be notified. If you begin working on such a request, copies of information you intend to provide should be given to WO Legislative Affairs before sending them to the requesting congressional office. If there are questions as to whether a request should be handled directly or referred to WO, please contact the appropriate staff in the WO Legislative Affairs Group (see attached list of staff assignments).
2. Preparing Legislation. In many instances, either members of Congress or the Administration propose legislation which affects the BLM. When BLM participation in such efforts is requested, it must be coordinated through WO Legislative Affairs. Also, WO Legislative Affairs occasionally drafts legislation, but only with Departmental and, when necessary, Office of Management and Budget (OMB) clearance. The WO Legislative Affairs staff's participation in legislation is sometimes initiated via contact between congressional staff and the field or WO program staff. If so, WO Legislative Affairs needs to be notified as soon as this type of discussion begins.

Legislative language, concepts, or suggestions should not be given directly to congressional offices without clearance from WO Legislative Affairs. The WO Legislative Affairs staff will ensure proper review within the Department of the Interior and elsewhere, as necessary, and prepare documents for Departmental or Directorate signature. In the past, BLM and the Department occasionally have been unaware of legislative initiatives which originated in the field. In turn, the field may not be aware of Departmental or Secretarial initiatives that may be relevant, but please be assured that WO Legislative Affairs will make every effort to notify State and Field Offices as appropriate. We need to adhere to these procedures in order to avoid the confusion and embarrassment that occurs when one office of the BLM is perceived as taking a position on legislation that differs from the BLM headquarters, the Department, or the Administration.

3. Commenting on Legislation. Congressional staff members often ask the BLM for formal or informal comments on a legislative proposal. Sometimes those requests will be sent to field offices or State Offices. The BLM's responses to these requests must go through the Department for approval. The WO Legislative Affairs staff is responsible for coordinating the appropriate review by the Department. The Department will review the BLM's comments for consistency with Administration policy. If responses -- including drafts -- are sent directly to Congress without this review, we run the risk of taking conflicting positions on Administration policy. This can be both embarrassing to the BLM and detrimental to our legislative aims.

4. Hearings and Testimony. Requests to testify at hearings, either in Washington or in the field, must be coordinated with the Department through WO Legislative Affairs. The Department has established procedures with respect to hearings with which BLM must comply. For example, the Department will only testify on legislation that has been introduced, not on draft legislative proposals, and it will not testify with less than one week's notice of a hearing. Therefore, any notification (formal or informal) of a proposed hearing must be shared immediately with WO Legislative Affairs so that BLM and the Department can have the maximum amount of time possible to decide if we will testify, who should testify, and testimony preparation.

5. Meetings with Members and Staff. The WO Legislative Affairs staff provides assistance in arranging such meetings, including those requested by Congress and staff and those initiated by the BLM. All meetings in Washington must be coordinated with WO Legislative Affairs.

6. Correspondence. Correspondence from Members of Congress or other elected officials that is either addressed to field officials or assigned to the field for response (e.g., letters to the Director or departmental officials) will often concern routine public information matters. Such inquiries may be answered directly, without need for WO review. However, when the subject matter involves stating or clarifying BLM or Administration policy (especially when a recent policy change has occurred), the responding office must coordinate the response with the appropriate WO directorate or group (WO 600 or elsewhere). This may result in informal or formal WO review of draft correspondence, as appropriate. In rare instances, WO may direct that all correspondence related to a particular issue be reviewed in WO prior to its transmittal. In addition, the field needs to consult with the WO in cases where it believes that the response should originate in the WO or find another office in the Department.

7. Lobbying Activities. The Department provides guidance concerning what may and may not be done regarding the use of Interior appropriated funds for lobbying activities. This guidance is on the Department's ethics Web site (www.doi.gov/ethics) and should be reviewed by all BLM employees. Questions about whether planned communications to the public would be affected by these lobbying restrictions should be referred to the Solicitor's Office in Washington or the Regional or Field Solicitor.

Attached is a list of WO Legislative Affairs staff and their areas of responsibility. If you have any questions regarding the above procedures or other legislative issues, please contact Nancy Smith, Legislative Affairs Group Manager, on (202) 452-5010, or Larry Finfer, Assistant Director - Communications, on (202) 208-6913.

Signed by:
Nina Rose Hatfield
Acting Director

Authenticated by:
Barbara J. Brown
Policy & Records Group, WO-560

1 Attachment

1 - Contacts for Legislative Affairs (1 p)

Legislative Affairs (WO620)

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR – COMMUNICATIONS (WO-600)

Bob Johns (Acting)

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS (WO-620)

Nancy Smith, Group Manager

Bureau of Land Management (MS-401LS)

1849 C. Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20240

PHONE (202) 452-5010 FAX (202) 452-0346

Employee	Activity Responsibilities	Backup	Special Issues	Backup	States/AD
CRAIG LEFF Dep. Group Manager 452-7726	Budget/Payroll Forestry (Public Domain and O&C) Law Enforcement Fire Program (Wildfire/Fire Management)	Smith Nelson Holmes Nelson	Stewardship Contracts Service First	Nelson Nelson	NV AD-800
ANN JUNIUS Staff Assistant 452-5062	Clerical Support Time and Attendance FAX – Mass Projects	Briggs Briggs Briggs			
STEPHANIE BRIGGS Staff Assistant 452-5172	Clerical Support Presentation Material Briefing Books	Junius Greene Junius			
YVONNE GREENE Legislative Research 452-5121	Weekly Reports Legislative Hearing Tracking Congressional Report Tracking	Junius Holmes Briggs	Internet/Intranet Coord.	Briggs	
EARL HOLMES 452-5018	Legislative Expediter PILT	Greene Greene	Bureau Legislative Outreach		ES
THERESA COLEMAN 452-7704	Solid Minerals Hazmat Endangered Species Fisheries & Wildlife Paleontology/Cultural Weeds & Pest Management	Wilkinson Wilkinson Holmes Holmes Nelson Nelson	Coal Administration Mining Law	Wilkinson Wilkinson	CA AD-200 AD-300
ANDREA NELSON 452-5004	Planning Military Lands Wild Horse & Burros Native American Issues Rights-of-Way (Roads)	Sedlmayr Leff/Holmes Coleman Coleman Coleman	Disclaimer of Interest RS2477	Coleman Coleman	ID OR/WA NM/OK AD-200 AD-300
LAURIE SEDLMAYR 452-5003	National Landscape Conservation System (Monuments, NCAs, Wilderness, Rivers, Trails) Range Lands and Realty	Nelson Leff Wilkinson/ Coleman	Lewis & Clark Bicentennial	Holmes	AZ CO UT AD-300 AD-400
PATRICK WILKINSON 452-7796	Fluid Minerals Recreation Rights-of-Way (pipelines)	Coleman Leff Nelson	National Energy Plan Coalbed Natural Gas NPR2	Coleman Coleman Coleman	WY AK MT/ ND/SD AD-200 AD-300

Notes: Each individual will be responsible for:

1. Activities primarily on national basis
2. Minor state specific related issues, Coordination with the State PAO, State Director, State Management Team

